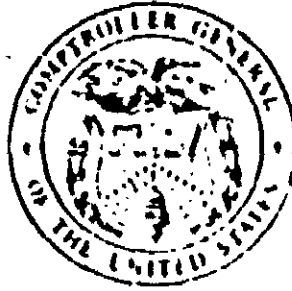


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DECISION



Wetiskup
THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548
20553-

FILE: B-204537

DATE: January 13, 1982

MATTER OF: Hawaiian Airlines, Inc.

DIGEST:

GAO will not question General Services Administration (GSA) solicitation for air passenger services which required carrier to be a party to the GSA teleticketing agreement where there has been no clear showing that the teleticketing requirement is unreasonable.

Hawaiian Airlines, Inc., protests the General Services Administration's (GSA) award of a contract to Mid-Pacific Air under solicitation No. GS-00T-009-81. The solicitation sought offers to provide the Government's requirements for air passenger services between certain selected pairs of cities, and stipulated that the carrier must be a party to the GSA teleticketing agreement or will enter into the agreement within 30 days after award. Hawaiian Airlines contends that the membership requirement exceeded GSA's actual needs, and alleges that Mid-Pacific is not a party to the agreement. We deny the protest.

The sole basis for the first contention is the protester's allegation that it was informed in a conversation with GSA personnel seven weeks after bid opening that the presence of a Scheduled Airline Ticket Office (SATO) in Honolulu's Federal Building eliminated the need for the GSA teleticketing membership requirement regarding services within Hawaii. GSA, however, denies ever having so informed the protester. In any event, the accuracy of the protester's assertion here is not essential to the resolution of the case.

The general rule applied by this Office is that we will not question an agency's determination of its minimum needs unless there is a clear showing that the determination was unreasonable. Government officials are

generally in the best position to know what constitutes the actual needs of the Government, and consequently are in the best position to draft specifications expressing these needs. Copy Machines, Inc., B-198691, August 24, 1981, 81-2 CPD 166.

GSA has advised us that membership in the teleticketing agreement is essential for obtaining interline transportation to Hawaii from sites outside Hawaii. Under the teleticketing agreement, any member may issue tickets for other members and teletype the tickets to the agency directly. Thus, where connecting flights will be required, an agency efficiently may make travel arrangements through one member airline without having to call any other airline and physically pick up the tickets at the airlines' offices. While the same procedure may be accomplished through SATO, very few civilian agencies now have access to SATO offices whereas many agencies have teleticketing facilities. Therefore, GSA contends the teleticketing agreement is the only way the numerous agencies without access to SATO can arrange interline travel with one airline and be assured of obtaining valid tickets for the connecting airline or airlines.

We believe GSA's explanation for the membership requirement is reasonable. Since the protester has not submitted any evidence to demonstrate otherwise, we do not question the requirement.

Regarding Mid-Pacific Air's compliance with the membership requirement, GSA reports that the awardee became a member of the GSA teleticketing agreement on September 9, 1981, within 30 days after award on August 11, 1981, as required by the solicitation.

The protest is denied.

Harry R. Chen
For Comptroller General
of the United States



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON D.C. 20548

B-204537

January 13, 1982

The Honorable Spark Matsunaga
United States Senate

Dear Senator Matsunaga:

We refer to your interest in the protest filed by Hawaiian Airlines, Inc. concerning the award of a contract under solicitation No. GS-00T-009-81.

By decision of today, copy enclosed, we have denied the protest. As requested, the correspondence attached to your letter is returned herewith.

Sincerely yours,

Larry R. Van Clow
For Comptroller General
of the United States

Enclosures